



Field Workload Analysis Brief – March 2015

Director Mary Beth Bonaventura, Indiana Department of Child Services

History of 12/17 Caseload Standard

- The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) published caseload “standards for excellence” for child welfare workers. CWLA recommends that assessment workers (those investigating allegations of abuse and neglect) carry a maximum of 12 cases per month, and ongoing workers (those carrying ongoing protective services cases) carry no more than 17 families. In Indiana, DCS counts one child as one ongoing case.
- Indiana adopted standards based on CWLA’s recommendations in 2007, codified in IC 31-25-2-5.
- In February 2015, CWLA announced a plan to revisit its existing caseload recommendations over the coming months. CWLA is reaching out to child welfare leaders nationwide for input on these critical workload issues.
- No universal caseload standard is used by all states, and most states do not have caseload standards codified in statute. Moreover, many states weigh cases differently in calculating caseload compliance, which means that case counts are not a function of just volume, but also complexity.

Factors Leading to Increased Caseloads

- Increased reports to the Indiana Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline – *6% more reports in CY14 vs. CY13*
- Increased assessments (investigations of child abuse and neglect) – *21% more assessments in SFY14 vs. SFY13*
- Increased ongoing cases (case management for children who are wards of the state) – *23% more children with open Child in Need of Services (CHINS) cases in Dec. 2014 vs. Dec. 2013*
- Fluctuations in monthly assessments – *a difference of 2,595 assessments between the high/low months of SFY14*

Staffing Increases in Recent Years

- In SFY13, DCS added 136 new field Family Case Manager (FCM) positions and 75 FCM supervisor positions. DCS added an additional 110 FCM positions in SFY14. As of Feb. 2015, DCS had 1,710 field FCM positions.

DCS Actions Taken to Date

- **January 2015** – Contracted with Deloitte Consulting to conduct a field workload analysis. DCS implemented a targeted effort to ensure that completed assessments are closed in a timely manner, and also enhanced the new worker training curriculum to provide better hands-on experience and mentoring support for incoming FCMs.
- **March 2015** – Increased the training class size for FCMs to 65 new hires every 4 weeks (up from 50). DCS also began training supervisors in cohorts/classes so that all supervisor trainees begin at the same time and have special training and mentorship opportunities together.
- **Ongoing efforts** – DCS is one of 10 jurisdictions nationwide that received a grant (\$735,000 over five years) to implement a workforce change initiative, and its focus is on employee recruitment and retention. Planning efforts began in 2014, with implementation starting June 2015. DCS also partnered with KSM Consulting to identify trends in assessments, impact on future involvement, and trends and causation of the increase in CHINS cases. DCS executive staff have recurring meetings to discuss caseloads and have been analyzing data to identify what is driving the increase in CHINS cases and case length. DCS is also working with the State Personnel Department to reduce staff vacancies and increase recruitment efforts statewide.

Approach to Address Staff Workload – Field Workload Analysis

- DCS engaged Deloitte to conduct a field workload analysis to better understand Indiana’s workload concerns, and to analyze how specific aspects of operations may be furthering or inhibiting its ability to meet its caseload

standards. The goal was to identify process and practice improvements to support quality case management, and to determine whether the existing standard is an appropriate measure of staff caseloads.

- Over seven weeks, Deloitte used five methods to gather information about DCS's practices and operations, including analysis of agency data, work sessions with staff, field observations of frontline staff, case reviews, and a time study. Additionally, Deloitte conducted a review of national leading child welfare practices.

Summary of Deloitte's Recommendations

In its final report, Deloitte made 10 recommendations for addressing specific organizational and management challenges within DCS. The analysis identified both long-term and short-term process and procedural changes likely to be strongly correlated with meeting the current 12/17 caseload standard. Deloitte identified several efficiencies that should, over time, reduce the number of FCMs needed to best care for children.

Director Bonaventura is committed to ensuring that field staff have manageable caseloads so they can ensure safety to children and families across the state. DCS will work with the legislature and the administration to implement recommendations made in the study, which are summarized below:

- 1. Improve Current Caseload Calculation for 12/17:** Review definitions for ongoing caseloads and focus on improving the method used to calculate assessment workload.
- 2. Case Closure Initiative:** Design a case closure initiative to help monitor and manage backlogs.
- 3. Increase Worker Skill and Use of Technology:** Better train FCMs on the functionality of the MaGIK case management system, which will allow FCMs greater time efficiency and remove duplicative efforts.
- 4. Workforce Planning:** Use workforce analytics to identify current and forecasted staffing needs, and build a recruiting and retention strategy to fill existing vacancies and minimize future staffing shortages.
- 5. Realignment of FCM Duties:** Identify routine FCM duties and realign resources to better support FCMs.
- 6. Performance Metrics:** Implement a performance management methodology for the case lifecycle, including a routine pipeline analysis and performance metrics to provide insight into critical trends and patterns.
- 7. Data Use Training for Administrators and Supervisors:** Better familiarize supervisors with institutional data resources and train them in data-informed management practices.
- 8. Management Training for Supervisors:** Design improved training to include employee development techniques, focusing on mentoring and management strategies to better support FCMs.
- 9. Evidence-Based Informal Adjustment (IA) Criteria:** Devise a set of evidence-informed criteria to promote consistent statewide use and practice of IAs.
- 10. Centralized Project Management Office (PMO):** Creating a PMO to provide oversight and governance is critical to implementing the other efficiencies identified in Deloitte's analysis.

Staffing Needs & Budget Request

- Based on February 2015 data, DCS would need 142 additional staff for compliance with the 12/17 standard:
 - 100 new FCM positions (in addition to filling the existing 77 vacant FCM positions)
 - 17 new FCM supervisors (1:6 ratio of supervisors to FCMs)
 - 8 attorneys to support the new FCMs and help move children to permanency
 - 17 new administrative positions to support office operations, as Deloitte identified that administrative tasks consume roughly 30% of an FCM's time
- Adding new positions will require expanding current staff training in both capacity and programming. Adding staff to local offices will require a statewide discussion on space needs, as many offices are at or nearing maximum capacity even with reconfiguration efforts being made to accommodate previous staffing increases.
- Estimated annual fiscal impact is \$7.5 million, which includes cost of 100 FCMs and 17 FCM supervisors. Funding for attorney salaries, administrative staff salaries, training, and office space will be achieved through agency efficiencies and maximizing existing resources.